

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 HA-05 ICA-11 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PA-01 BIB-01 SP-02 H-01
/064 W

-----051940 081741Z /43

R 071027Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2751

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: SREF TH
SUBJECT: RTG TEMPORARILY CLOSES REFUGEE CAMPS TO NEWSMEN

1. IN COURSE OF ROUTINELY REQUESTING ACCESS TO REFUGEE CAMPS,
NEWSWEEK HONG KONG BUREAU CHIEF HOLGER JENSEN AND BANGKOK STRINGER
DAVID HATCHER WERE INFORMED THAT CAMPS WOULD BE CLOSED TO NEWSMEN
FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD.

2. EMBOFF QUERIED MFA OFFICIAL REGARDING INCIDENT AND WAS
INFORMED THAT RTG HAD CLOSED CAMPS PENDING REVIEW OF POLICY OF
PRESS ACCESS. UNTIL NEW REGULATIONS COULD BE ISSUED, JOURNALISTS
WOULD BE BARRED FOR "TWO OR THREE WEEKS," ACCORDING TO THIS
OFFICIAL. EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT AMERICAN PRESS WAS PLAYING VITAL
ROLE IN INCREASING AWARENESS OF REFUGEE SITUATION AND THAT
AMERICAN PRESS ACCESS TO CAMPS COULD HELP THAILAND BY MAKING
ACCEPTANCE OF GREATER NUMBER OF REFUGEES MORE LIKELY.
MFA OFFICIAL RESPONDED THAT RTG REAL CONCERN WAS THAT JOURNALISTS
WOULD INTERVIEW INDOCHINA REFUGEES AND PRINT STORIES CRITICAL
OF COUNTRIES WITH WHICH THAILAND CURRENTLY SEEKING IMPROVED
RELATIONS. HE ADDED THAT "THREAT" BY NEWSWEEK REPORTERS TO CRITICIZE
THAILAND IN PRINT FOR BARRING JOURNALISTS CONSTITUTED IMPROPER
BEHAVIOUR. JENSEN PROCEEDED ON HIS OWN TO LAMSING REFUGEE CAMP
AND WAS ADMITTED BY THE LOCAL COMMANDER AFTER ASSURING HIM THAT
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PERMISSION TO ENTER WAS "ON THE WAY."

3. TWO DAYS LATER, AP BUREAU CHIEF WAS INFORMED BY ASST. DIRECTOR,
MISPLACED PERSONS DIVISION, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, KAMON THAT
OFFICIAL PERMISSION TO ENTER CAMP IN SONGKHLA COULD NOT BE
GIVEN AT PRESENT TIME, BUT IF HE APPROACHED SONGKHLA GOVERNOR
INFORMALLY HE WOULD PROBABLY BE ADMITTED. AP TEAM GOING TO

SONGKHLA THIS WEEKEND.

COMMENT - PRESS HAS NOT REACTED STRONGLY TO CLOSURE THUS FAR,
PROBABLY BECAUSE ACCESS CONTINUES TO BE POSSIBLE EVEN THOUGH
UNAPPROVED. EMBASSY CONTINUING TO EMPHASIZE TO RTG IMPORTANCE
OF ACCESS OF US MEDIA TO CAMPS AS A MEANS OF FOCUSING ATTENTION
ON PLIGHT OF REFUGEES AND IMPROVING CLIMATE FOR INCREASED
ACCEPTANCES. UNHCR ALSO WEIGHING IN, FYI, COLONEL KAMON INFORMED
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF UNHCR APRIL 5 THAT REAL REASON FOR
TEMPORARY CLOSURE WAS HENRY KAMM ARTICLE REPORTING UBON GOVERNOR
STATEMENT THAT HE HAD FORCIBLY REPATRIATED OVER 300 REFUGEES TO
LAOS. END FYI.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, REFUGEE CAMPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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ISecure: 1
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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